



COMMISSION ON

ASIAN PACIFIC

AMERICAN AFFAIRS

CAPAA

Improving the lives of Asian Pacific Americans

July 2000

Volume 1, Issue 2

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear APA Community Members and Friends,

Over the last few months the CAPAA participated in several community and policy development activities. Among these activities were holding a board meeting in the Wapato area, helping with the API (Asian Pacific Islander) Vote 2000 initiative, and working with the Unity Think Tank (UTT).

On June 17th, the CAPAA held one of its five annual meetings in Wapato, Washington, where we met with community members who shared with us some of their local concerns. One concern around capital funding has come up in other communities so I will discuss this briefly here.

For those who seek state capital funding, there are two grant programs that may be of interest depending on the project and programs offered in your facility: 1) Building for the Arts and 2) Community Services Facilities Programs; both through the Department of Community Development. Also, state agencies can sponsor community organizations—whose missions are aligned with the hosting agency—through the state's capital budget process. Whichever direction you take, it is best to get a good head start since these processes can be long and complicated. If you need copies of the grant applications, please contact our office.

Another of CAPAA's recent activities is working with the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) and other organizations in a non-partisan and national effort to increase voter registration and voter turnout during the 2000 election. The goal is to elevate the Asian Pacific American (APA) voice through political presence in one of the biggest elections in years. If you are interested in this initiative, please email Cathy Lowenberg, apivote2000@hotmail.com.



Photo courtesy of Sandy Pascua.

CAPAA Wapato meeting. Back Row: Rey Pascua, Marc Delacruz, Bobbi Baldoz, Stella Vasquez, Dr. In Guk Kim, Tony Cube, Krist Baldoz, Habib M. Habib, Tony Lee, Randy Bolong, Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins, Andy Pascua, and John Graganta. Front Row: Grace Chen, Ko Vang, Kara Kondo, and Carrie Huie-Pascua.

Yet another example of our activities is tracking the work of the UTT, which is made up of smaller think tanks (TTs) representing ethnic communities who are deeply concerned about how students of color will fare under the new high-standards and some call, high-stakes, education reform system. Thus far, the TTs identified struggling schools and are formulating community-based support plans. In the upcoming months, the CAPAA will work closely with the APA Think Tank to address APA academic performance and parental involvement challenges in the immigrants, refugees, and Pacific Islanders communities.

The CAPAA also tracks many other issues. For example, this newsletter edition discusses our state's workforce development system, whose new policies and guidelines have significant implications for historically untapped-workforce pools.

Thank you for taking the time to read the articles. We hope you find them informative. Please let us know what you think and how we can serve the APA community best.

Sincerely,

Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins

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Dear Friends,

In 1998 the Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which requires states to develop a comprehensive, integrated workforce training system to improve job training, literacy, and employment. The Act comes at an opportune time when the economy is strong and employers are having difficulty finding skilled workers. Every year, there are thousands of high-paying job openings that go unfilled.

In response to WIA, Governor Locke issued an executive order last year which sets priorities including assisting disadvantaged and low-wage workers move up the job ladder and close the earnings gap facing people of color, disabled persons and women. The Governor's order is significant because it declares that one of the major goals of our workforce training system is to help low-wage workers—such as immigrants, people of color, disabled persons—get better jobs and higher pay. This order has the potential to target this state's training resources to help

disadvantaged workers who have not benefited from the booming economy and who traditionally have not been served well by the job training system.

The API community has a big stake in the development of local workforce training systems. There are significant opportunities, for example, for establishing ESL training for immigrant workers at their worksites, just to cite one type of training which looks promising. The API community, however, needs to be involved in legislative decisions and in the local Workforce Development Councils (WDC) if the goal of the executive order is to become a reality for thousands of low-wage workers.



Sincerely,

Tony Lee, Chair

APA Service Agency Snapshot

South Pacific Islander Educational Support Services

By Marc Delacruz, Student Intern

The South Pacific Islander Educational Support Services addresses the educational and cultural needs of South Pacific Islander (SPI) youth in western Washington. Its mission is to provide educational services to bi-cultural SPI youth and to educate other students about the cultures of South Pacific Islanders. With an estimated 2,500 SPI students currently enrolled in the Seattle School District alone, this is no small task.

In 1972, the program began as the Samoan Intervention Services (SIS) as a response to high drop-out rates among Samoan American students. Today, the SPI Educational Support Services Program serves the broader population of SPI students through the efforts of its founder and coordinator, Von Paul Patu. Mr. Patu and his wife, Betty, work with approximately

65 schools in the Seattle, Kent, Renton, Highline and Tacoma districts. Activities and services include after-school programs, anti-drug, anti-violence, and anti-tobacco campaigns, promotion and teaching of good study habits, and guidance on culturally appropriate education. Currently Mr. and Mrs. Patu are coordinating efforts with Denny Middle School to set up a daily summer program that provides SPI students with educational activities that emphasize the importance of academics, social behavior, and school attendance. Also in the works is a program that focuses on improving communication and relationships between parents and children.

Examples of PI Organizations in Washington State

- ◇ Friendly Islands of Tonga Society. Contact: 206-933-8598
- ◇ Hidden Heritage of Fiji. Contact: Buna Cakau, 425-746-0635
- ◇ Hui Hoaloha Ulana, Micronesian Islands Club, Pacific Islanders Technical Society, Polynesian Student Alliance.
Contact: University of Washington, 206-543-2100
- ◇ Islanders Children and Youth Services. Contact: 206-281-6528
- ◇ Seattle Samoan Center. Contact: Lima Skillion, 206-835-9440
- ◇ South Pacific Islander Educational Support Services.
Contact: Von Paul Patu, 206-933-5400
- ◇ The Tongan American Pacific Association of Seattle.
Contact: Pastor Sione Kongaika, 206-248-3997

Washington State Workforce Development Primer

By Tony Cube, Legislative Liaison

Washington's Booming Economy and its Workforce

Washington's economy is strong, and the state's unemployment rate—at about four percent—is the lowest in over twenty years. However, while workers are under pressure to have higher skills to move to higher paying jobs, high-tech to construction employers are hard-pressed to find skilled workers. The software industry is especially hard hit with an estimated 60,000 more information-based workers needed in the next three years. Interestingly, of the total job openings for the next five years, 38,000 job openings per year are for workers with some post-secondary training but not necessarily a four-year degree. Yet, the state's two-year colleges, private career schools, and apprenticeship programs produce only 19,000 such graduates per year. The gap is enormous, forcing some companies to look abroad for prospective employees. The problem is further complicated by the fact that while urban centers have access to high wages and many job opportunities, our rural areas have a difficult time attracting high-tech companies and therefore lack access to better paying high-tech jobs. As a result, rural areas are susceptible to stagnating wages and higher unemployment rates.

Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Without enough qualified workers during a time of low unemployment rates, our national and state economic prosperity may be in danger. To address this problem, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, mandating states to prepare more people to enter the labor force. Specifically, the WIA requires the creation and redesign of existing state workforce development programs to improve worker training, employment opportunities, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation efforts. The WIA (successor of the Job Training Partnership Act) provides the framework for a workforce preparation and employment system that meets the needs of both businesses that need high-skilled workers and individuals who need better, higher-paying jobs. It calls for a simplified one-stop system that helps people find better jobs and, over time, receive better wages.

Washington State's Workforce Development Plan

Governor Gary Locke issued Executive Order 99-02 (EO 99-02) as a response to the WIA. As our state's workforce development guide, EO 99-02 calls for the implementation of an integrated workforce development system that includes among others: employment services; vocational training at community and technical colleges, private career schools, and high schools; adult basic education and literacy programs; retraining for dislocated workers; school-to-work and programs targeting at-risk youth; and vocational rehabilitation training for disabled adults. The order directs the Workforce Training and Education

Coordinating Board (WTECB) to work with business, labor, local workforce development councils, and other state agencies to develop goals, objectives, and other strategies to "promote universal access to employment and training programs." The WTECB is also charged to address what the Governor considers as three challenges facing the state:

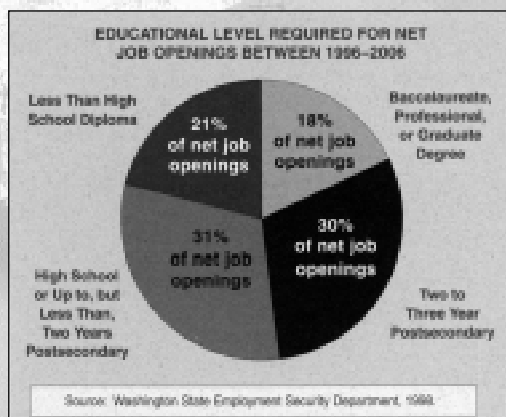
- ❖ Closing the gap between the needs of employers and the supply of skilled workers.

- ❖ Training that enables current and dislocated workers to make smooth transitions during economic change so they may fully benefit from the new economy.

- ❖ Developing a wage progression strategy so low-income and entry-level workers, the disabled, new immigrants, people of color, WorkFirst participants and others can "move up the ladder" during their lifetimes.

Among the WTECB's other responsibilities are creating a state unified plan to guide the state's workforce development efforts; approving local workforce development plans; advising the Governor on workforce strategies; and establishing a system to measure the performance of the workforce development system. To fully implement EO 99-02, the WTECB will work to meet several goals over the next five to ten years. The most notable goals include improving K-12 education to better transition students from school-to-work, increasing training opportunities for the labor force, and closing the gap between the demand and supply of postsecondary training.

Last spring, the U.S. Department of Labor approved the state's unified plan and the state will receive federal funding towards implementation beginning July 1, 2000.



Sources: Employment Security Department, 1998; Executive Order 99-02; "High Skills, High Wages," WTECB, 1998; "Workforce Training: Supply, Demand and Gaps," WTECB, 1998.

CAPAA

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CAPAA Calendar and Selected Community Events

CAPAA Meetings and Forums

- Board Meeting: September 23, Bremerton.
 - Board Meeting: November 11, Bellingham or King County.
 - Forum are on an as need basis.
- Call CAPAA for more information.

Events of Interest

July 17th – API Vote 2000 Meeting, Mondays at 6:30 PM, International Drop In Clinic in Seattle. E-mail: apivote2000@hotmail.com

July 19th – Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP) 12th Annual Leadership Awards Dinner, Universal City, CA.
Contact: 213-485-1422.

July 22nd – The Chinese American Experience in World War II documentary film. University of Washington, Hub Auditorium, 1:30-3:30 PM, free.
Contact: (206) 232-5974.

July 23rd – Annual Bon Odori Festival featuring traditional Japanese dance, food, crafts, etc. Seattle Buddhist Church.
Contact: (206) 329-0800 or (206) 374-0189.

July 30th – Pista Sa Nayon, Philippine-American Festival, Seward Park in Seattle, 11 AM - 7 PM.
Contact: (206) 296-4004.

Aug. 1st – Gabriela Network-NW focuses on solidarity work around Filipina and Asian Women's Issues globally and domestically, meets on 1st Tuesdays, 6 PM, Seattle.
Contact: 206-824-8229.

Aug. 5th – "Sheer Realities Clothing and Power in Nineteenth-Century Philippines", Seattle Asian Art Museum exhibit. Free Saturday from 11 AM to 2PM. Family activities with artist Romson Bustillo.
Contact: 206-654-3129.

Aug. 6th – 55th Anniversary of U.S. Bombing of Hiroshima, Japan.

Aug. 9th – 55th Anniversary of U.S. Bombing of Nagasaki, Japan.

Aug. 16-19th – Korean Community Counseling Center 2nd Annual Summer Youth Conference, Seattle Pacific University.
Contact: 206-784-5691.

Volunteer and Make a Difference

Looking for volunteer or internship opportunities? Please call the CAPAA at (206) 464-5820. You *will* make a difference.

Be Part of the CAPAA Community

If you would like to receive this bi-monthly newsletter or be part of our email and update list, please contact our office.



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Pacific Islanders 101

By Ko Vang, Community Outreach Coordinator

Who are Pacific Islanders?

Among the many Asian Pacific American members, the Pacific Islander community is perhaps the least familiar to the average Washingtonian. The term “Pacific Islander” (PI) is used to identify the indigenous people of the Melanesian (New Guinea, Fiji, and Solomon Islands), Micronesian (Guam, Northern Marianas, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau), and Polynesian (New Zealand, Tonga, Marquesa, Tahiti, Hawaii, and Samoa) islands in the South Pacific.

Immigration Patterns

Historically, little is known about the migration patterns of PIs in the U.S. since their migration trends were not recorded before the 1980 Census. However, we do know from locally recorded history that during the 1700's, native-Hawaiians entered Washington as sailors and laborers recruited for the booming fur trade. Many would eventually intermarry with the Indians, settle in Washington, and leave their mark in the community. Kanaka Bay on San Juan Island, for example, is named for the Hawaiian shepherders who settled there.



Samoan American performing in Hawaii.

Exclusionary Laws

In 1849 and 1850, respectively, the U.S. denied Hawaiians the right to become American citizens and the right to claim land. As a result, many returned to Hawaii while others moved to California where they were still valued as seamen. Also, due to strict exclusionary laws, PI emigration remained minimal prior to 1941. At the end of WWII, the U.S. increased its territorial areas to include Guam, American Samoa, and the North Mariana Islands and adopted Hawaii as the 50th state. As a result, PI emigration to the U.S. mainland increased.

Current Population and Challenges

Today, economic and educational opportunities continue to draw PIs to the continental U.S. According to the 1990 Census, Washington had 211,292 APA residents. Of this population, PIs made up 6.6% (5,047 Hawaiian; 3,589 Samoan; 3,816 Guamanian; and 1,481

other PIs). The majority of PIs reside within the urbanized areas of King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane counties.

Among the greatest challenges for the PI community is disaggregating their unique characteristics from the greater APA collective. Also because PI communities in Washington are ethnically and culturally diverse and are relatively small in number, they often lack access to state and local governments. As a consequence, PI needs are usually not adequately met. For example, there is not enough detailed information about the academic performance of PI students. In order to begin to understand the unique issues in the PI community, PI data collection around academic performance as well as social and health services, for example, must be distinguished from the greater APA category.

PI Concern: Academic Performance in the New Education System

Little is known about the academic performance of PI students since PI statistics are undifferentiated within the larger APA category. However, there are ample observations to suggest that PI students are academically at-risk. Von Paul Patu, coordinator for the South Pacific Islanders Educational Support Services, states that PI children are struggling to do well in K-12 schools, especially under the state's new education reform system. The results of the most recent Washington Assessment on Student Learning (WASL) tests in the 4th, 7th and 10th grades from schools that have high PI student populations seem to confirm these struggles. Mr. Patu says, "South Pacific Islanders [students] must be equipped to face the new testing or else they will fail. The State must provide good funding to bring up [the students'] capacity to deal with the testing in order for it to be equal. Otherwise, there will be real chaos in the education system."

Sources: <http://www.pafb.af.mil/DEOMI/aahm.htm>; Gail Dubrow, et al, "The Historic Context for the Protection of Asian/Pacific American Resources in Washington State," 1993.

Population Trends and the Workforce:

Investing in People of Color

By Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins, Executive Director

There will be at least three phenomena affecting the health of our state's economy and our social welfare: more older people; population growth decrease; and a diverse population. In the next 20 years, these factors will influence all manners of policymaking. The third has already resulted in the reevaluation of our state's workforce development plan to include people of color. However, much still needs to be done as we adjust to these new conditions and ensure the social welfare of all members of our state in this new, global and high-tech based economy.

Aging Population

The first phenomenon is that Baby Boomers will retire during the next 20 years. They will leave the labor pool and pour their accumulated incomes to the local economy. And since senior citizens are big users of public and private services, their demands will result in an increased need for workers.

Population Growth Slowdown

The second trend is that our state's population growth is expected to decline by 69 percent during the same period. Since population growth is directly related to labor pool size, this slowdown coupled with Baby Boomers retiring will result in a shrinking labor pool even as demands for workers increase.

Diversity

The third change is that our state will become more racially diverse, reflecting a non-white population growth exceeding that of the white population. For example, the Hispanic and Asian Pacific American (APA) populations are increasing rapidly, with the latter making up the fastest growing racial group in the nation and in our state.

Consequently, the labor pool will be made up progressively more of women and people of color—those who traditionally have not had sufficient education and workforce training.

Major questions then arise: Will this new pool be ready to meet the demands of the new economy? Will they have the higher skills to progress up the job and wage ladder, allowing them to escape the bounds of poverty? How will we stop and reverse the widening income gap between the highly-skilled and lower-skilled populations?

Will We Be Prepared?

These questions are too complex to be adequately explored in this short article. However, it should be noted that our nation recognizes the necessity of education and training to ensure economic growth and social welfare. Indeed, in 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which requires states to overhaul their workforce training system to improve training, literacy, and employment. Our state is now implementing a State Unified Strategic Plan, which serves as our response to the WIA and Governor Gary Locke's Workforce Development Executive Order 99-02 (EO 99-02).

Significant to people of color is the EO 99-02's directive to develop a wage progression strategy so that low-income and entry-level workers, women, the disabled, new immigrants, and people of color can move up the job and wage ladder during their lifetimes. Nevertheless, a closer look at the Plan reveals many opportunities to better ensure the above directive's success. Specifically, the

Plan needs to have:

- ❖ Goals, objectives, strategies, and performance measures that ensure program access and retention as well as wage progression for people of color, people with disabilities, women, and disadvantaged youth.
- ❖ Priority and resources for special services for harder to reach communities, such as immigrants and refugees.
- ❖ Priority and resources that support services such as childcare, ESL and bi-lingual services, transportation, appropriate job related and basic adult education.
- ❖ Flexible local criteria that allows low-wage workers, who do not meet Federal poverty guidelines, to participate.
- ❖ One-Stop Centers that are linked to community-based organizations that provide cultural and language appropriate services as well as geographic access.

Economic and Social Welfare

For several reasons, including racial prejudice and social neglect, people of color on average receive less education and workforce training than whites. They are consequently prone to higher levels of unemployment; to low-skilled, low-wage jobs; and to poverty. As our state's labor force shrinks, becomes more diverse, and our economy demands more skilled-workers, it becomes a great economic imperative to educate and train historically disadvantaged workers to succeed in the globally-competitive and high-tech based economy.

It should not be lost, however, that the moral imperative to do so rings even *louder*. NOT changing the workforce development system to prepare disadvantaged groups will widen the income gap at an alarming pace between the high-skilled, high-paid and the low-skilled, low-paid among us; and create significant and permanent disparities in qualities of life. Such a gap already exists and increases every year. This unabated trend can only degrade our social fabric and therefore decay our democratic welfare.

Get Involved

The CAPAA encourages you to become involved in your local Workforce Development Councils. For more information about the state's Plan, please contact the Workforce Training and Education Board (360) 753-5662 or visit their Web site, <http://www.wa.gov/wtb>.



Filipino American farmworkers in eastern Washington.

Sources: "High Skills, High Wages," WTECB, 1998; Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington State, Office of Financial Management-Forecasting Division, Employment Security Department, 2000; "Labor Market and Economic Analysis—State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development," WTECB, 2000. Interview with Nemesio Domingo, Labor and Employment Law Offices, February 2000.